



COMMERCIAL MARKET STRATEGIES  
NEW DIRECTIONS IN REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

## Country Profile



## PAKISTAN

**Increasing access  
to hormonal family  
planning methods  
through social  
marketing**

### PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

In Pakistan, the Commercial Market Strategies (CMS) project supports Key Social Marketing (KSM), a local family planning program that increases access to high-quality hormonal contraceptive methods.



## THE KEY LOGO



The Key logo is a recognizable symbol of quality family planning products and information. The brand equity created by the logo helps stimulate demand for KSM products and services.

## VOICE FROM THE FIELD

### *Mohalla Sangat* participant

I had a lot of questions about oral contraceptives, but did not know where to go to get answers. Then I went to a Key *Mohalla Sangat* meeting in my neighborhood. The Key Lady Health Visitor was very knowledgeable, and my questions were answered right on the spot. I have been a satisfied *Famila 28* user for two years now.



Women and children attended a Key *Mohalla Sangat* meeting.



## CONTEXT

Pakistan has a population of 144 million and a 2.1 percent annual growth rate, making it one of the fastest-growing countries. Although the total fertility rate declined from 5.5 in 1997 to 4.8 in 2002, contraceptive prevalence is only 28 percent, and modern-method use is only 20 percent. Sterilization is the most popular modern method. Public-sector family planning programs have had limited impact because of political, cultural, and resource constraints. Sustained efforts involving both the public and private sectors are needed to address the high unmet need for family planning — estimated at 38 percent.

The KSM program was launched in 1997, with funding from the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), to promote awareness and use of hormonal methods. By mid-2002, however, a lack of funding threatened to end KSM's activities. Donors were developing their own population strategies for Pakistan and were unable to support the program. To avoid disruption — especially given KSM's significant contribution in the family planning market — USAID provided interim funding to KSM through the CMS project. This funding acted as a bridge and supported KSM activities until new donor resources were secured.



KSM produced a series of 10 television commercials to promote Key pills and injectables. The ads target couples who want to space their children.

## PROGRAM COMPONENTS

The KSM program is based on the premise that lack of information about family planning and lack of access to quality services and products are major barriers to increased use of modern contraceptives. The program offers low- and middle-income Pakistani couples accurate birth-spacing information and affordable commercially branded hormonal contraceptive products and services. KSM markets two brands of pills, *Nordette 28* and *Famila 28*, as well as *Depo Provera*, a three-month injectable. Main program components include

- **Promotion** — of Key hormonal contraceptives and affiliated providers
- **Partnerships** — with pharmaceutical manufacturers to improve supply
- **Quality improvement** — training, detailing, and seminars for private-sector providers
- **Public relations** — with professional associations to build provider support and knowledge

## PROMOTION

**Branding.** Key is the brand name of the products distributed by the KSM program. The products have their regular brand name and then are overbranded with the Key logo. Branding is extended to trained providers that display the Key logo on signboards outside their clinics, pharmacies, and shops, indicating the availability of KSM products and accurate family planning information. Ninety percent of the target audience of lower-income couples are aware of the Key logo.

**Advertising.** Research conducted at the beginning of the KSM project confirmed that persistent misconceptions about hormonal methods are a deterrent to using modern family planning methods. KSM's media communication strategy focuses on addressing

three areas related to hormonal methods: specific misconceptions about hormonal methods, the management of side effects, and the benefits of birth spacing. KSM produced 10 television ads for oral contraceptives and 4 for injectables, targeting married couples of reproductive age who want to space their children. The ads were successful: A follow-up tracking survey found that 100 percent of the respondents in the target population recalled the ads and that 60 percent were able to name the contraceptive products marketed under the Key logo.

KSM also advertises its products in women's magazines and Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) publications for paramedics.

**Audiocassettes.** KSM produced and distributed an innovative audiocassette to deliver information on family planning and Key hormonal products to its target audience. The cassette, produced in six languages, allows KSM to reach women with low literacy and limited mobility — a major concern in a country with a 79 percent female illiteracy rate and cultural restrictions on women's activities outside the home. Audiocassettes are distributed by direct mail and through KSM field representatives and community workers, primarily in low-income neighborhoods and urban slums. The cassettes are popular, and demand for them is high. KSM has received 200 to 500 direct mail requests every month since 1999 and has distributed more than 700,000 copies. The cassette is also a valuable counseling tool for KSM service providers and community outreach workers.

The audiocassette educates women about their family planning choices. Women who have listened to the audiocassette are 12 times more likely than those who haven't to correctly answer at least four out of six critical questions about hormonal contraceptives. Forty percent of women who have listened to the audiocassette say that they are very likely to use hormonals in the future, compared with 26 percent of women who have not listened to the cassette.<sup>1</sup>

**Mohalla Sangat meetings.** KSM has trained over 5,000 Lady Health Visitors (LHVs). LHVs are health outreach workers who visit women in their homes and communities to educate them about improving maternal and child health, including the use of modern family planning. Once trained, each LHV is encouraged to use her new skills with the women in her neighborhood. Small groups of 10 to 15 women are invited to attend a two-hour *Mohalla Sangat* (neighborhood) meeting. At the meeting, the LHV plays the Key audiocassette and encourages sharing and discussion. The sessions are valuable to women with limited mobility and little opportunity to get accurate information and ask questions about reproductive health issues. To date, more than 140,000 women have attended *Mohalla Sangat* meetings. About half of the women attending choose to buy a Key contraceptive immediately following the session — more than two-thirds had never before used a modern method.

## PARTNERSHIPS

KSM partners with leading international and local pharmaceutical manufacturers in Pakistan (Pharmacia & Upjohn, Wyeth, and Zafa) to improve the supply of high-quality hormonal contraceptives. The partnerships typically consist of marketing support by KSM in return for commercial distribution and medical detailing of affordable hormonal methods by the manufacturer.

As part of its partnership with Zafa, a local manufacturer of oral contraceptives, KSM supports promotional activities for *Famila 28*. In return, Zafa invested in a world-class production facility, a national distribution system, and a 52-member detailing team to visit providers with information about hormonal contraceptives. *Famila 28* is positioned as an affordable choice for low-income couples. Within two months of its launch, *Famila 28* was the leading brand on the market.

## VOICES FROM THE FIELD: LADY HEALTH VISITORS

### Ms. Nuzhat

Ms. Nuzhat had a clinic in an area that was far from her home. Getting to her clinic was inconvenient, and she had to leave her son with her parents or with another caregiver. Ms. Nuzhat wanted to work in her own neighborhood, but she was hesitant to move her practice and lose her clientele. When Ms. Nuzhat volunteered for Key's program, she was encouraged to conduct sessions near her home. The response was so positive that by the fifth session, Ms. Nuzhat felt confident enough to move her clinic to her neighborhood. Since that time she has developed a good reputation and gets new clients through the *Mohalla Sangat* program. Her younger sister, a newly qualified LHV, is now helping her in the clinic. Key plans to visit Ms. Nuzhat on a regular basis to evaluate the long-term impact of the *Mohalla Sangat* program on her business and her neighbors' health.

### Khurshid Mughal

Khurshid Mughal runs her clinic from her residence in Karachi. During her *Mohalla Sangat* sessions, she uses Key audiocassettes in Pushto, Baluchi, and Urdu — languages spoken by the diverse clientele in her area. After Khurshid began participating in the *Mohallah Sangat* program, she noticed that her client ratio had improved: She is now able to support her family financially. Khurshid provides a valuable service, conducting *Mohallah Sangat* sessions in areas where there are no health facilities. One of her daughters recently completed the National Health Worker course, and they have decided to run the clinic together.

<sup>1</sup> Collumbien, M and M Douthwaite. 2003. "Pills, Injections, and Audiotapes: Reaching Couples in Pakistan." *Journal of Biosocial Science*, Vol. 35, 41–58.

KSM has a similar arrangement with Pharmacia & Upjohn for its injectable, *Depo Provera*. Under all of these agreements, KSM marketing support is contingent on the manufacturers' ability to keep the prices affordable for the target market. For all of the hormonal products marketed by KSM, the consumer price covers the costs of production and distribution.

### QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

To improve the quality of care, KSM trains physicians, paramedics, and pharmacists on contraceptive technology, with a special focus on hormonal methods. The country's professional association for physicians, the PMA, endorses KSM's training programs. Since the beginning of CMS support in September 2002, KSM has trained 5,503 physicians, 7,028 pharmacists, and 4,829 paramedics on contraceptive technology. Together, KSM and Green Star (another social marketing program with an extensive provider network) have trained between 80 and 90 percent of all eligible physicians and paramedics in Pakistan, as well as more than 30 percent of all pharmacists. Eligibility for training is determined by a number of factors, including willingness to provide family planning, adequate clinical facilities, client flow, and percentage of low-income clientele.

The training program is beginning to have an impact on entrenched provider biases against hormonals. After KSM training, the percentage of doctors who discouraged clients from using oral contraceptives declined from 64 to 47 percent.

In addition, KSM field representatives visit private providers to educate them about Key products and answer questions about hormonal methods. Between September 2002 and March 2003, the KSM field team made 50,000 detailing visits to more than 6,000 providers. KSM also hosted more than 290 seminars to brief providers on the latest contraceptive technology research and provided them with a forum to share their experiences in family planning counseling.

### PUBLIC RELATIONS

KSM works with major professional associations, including the PMA and the Pakistan Chemist and Druggists Association (PCDA), to strengthen provider support and knowledge about family planning. Both of these national associations endorse KSM products and services. In an important endorsement, included in an often-aired television ad, the PMA stated that "Key contraceptive products, services, and information audio-cassettes are effective in birth spacing and better maternal and child health."

KSM collaborates with the PMA on several initiatives, including the well-known *Key Doctor of the Year Award*; KSM/PMA free clinics; and the joint publication of reproductive health books and magazines, such as the Urdu translation of *Where There Is No Doctor for Women*.

With the PCDA, KSM sponsors the *Key Chemist Awards* and a series of seminars throughout the country for pharmacists.

### PROGRAM CHALLENGES

*Program development in rural areas has been hampered by a limited number of private providers.* More than 60 percent of Pakistan's population live in rural areas. Though KSM is focused in urban and semi-urban areas, the Pakistani government encouraged the project to extend its activities to the rural population. Expanding the reach of TV advertising was easy — but provider-dependent activities, such as *Mohalla Sangat* meetings and audiocassette distribution, were limited by a lack of private providers.

*There are numerous policy barriers to oral contraception access in rural areas.* Oral contraceptives are classified as prescription drugs and may only be sold by pharmacies. In rural areas, this policy limits access because non-pharmacy retail outlets make up the bulk of the commercial-sector distribution network. Prescription drugs are also subject to advertising restrictions, which limits promotional activities.



This billboard promotes KSM's injectable.

The government also restricts any commercial activity involving their community workers, known as Lady Health Workers (LHWs, not to be confused with KSM's Lady Health Visitors). Public-sector LHWs are a valuable group: Through their extensive rural networks, they can access women who are difficult to reach. They are also trained to promote health messages — about 70,000 were trained under a national program to implement a community outreach campaign. LHWs, however, focus on public-sector programs — they are not permitted to work with the private sector.

## PROGRAM RESULTS

The KSM program appears to have contributed to the growth of the private-sector hormonal contraceptive market, although it is difficult to prove attribution definitively. Private-sector sales of injectables increased from less than 60,000 vials in 1994 to more than 380,000 vials in 2001. KSM injectables constitute 42 percent of the private-sector market and contribute more than 52 percent of injectable couple years of protection. Sales of private-sector brands of oral contraceptives increased from 1.1 million cycles in 1994 to more than 2.5 million cycles in 2001, with Key pills accounting for about 61 percent of sales.

## LESSONS LEARNED

*Partnerships with local manufacturers can enhance program sustainability.* By partnering with Zafa, a local manufacturer of oral contraceptives, KSM developed the market for an affordable, quality product. *Famila 28*, Zafa's fully priced pill, is of international quality, yet affordable to low-income couples. KSM also demonstrated that a local producer can compete successfully — *Famila 28* became the market leader after only two months. This success builds local capacity and enhances program sustainability.

*Innovative communication strategies can bring information about family planning methods to hard-to-reach populations.*

The KSM family planning audiocassette made a significant contribution to improving awareness, understanding, and acceptance of hormonal methods among a large, low-income audience with low literacy and limited mobility. This innovative KSM tool allows potential family planning users to access accurate information in the privacy of their homes.

*Mohalla Sangat* group counseling sessions combine trained providers, the audiocassette, and access to products in a supportive environment. Small groups of women can have their questions and concerns about contraception answered by a trusted and trained neighbor. The *Mohalla Sangat* strategy overcomes the barriers of low literacy and limited mobility.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Collumbien, M and M Douthwaite. 2003. "Pills, Injections, and Audiotapes: Reaching Couples in Pakistan." *Journal of Biosocial Science*, Vol. 35, 41–58.

USAID/Pakistan website:  
<http://usembassy.state.gov/islamabad/www/usaidepak02.html>

*Cover photo:* Population Services International.



KSM announced the launch of Zafa's *Famila 28* with this ad. This locally produced pill became the market leader within two months.



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Commercial Market Strategies (CMS) is a USAID-funded project that aims to increase access to and demand for reproductive health and family planning products and services in developing countries through the private sector.